



United States Mint Lawsuit Ends in Historic Settlement Washington Mint, LLC Pays U.S. \$2.1 Million

August 8, 2002

WASHINGTON — The United States Mint announced today that the Department of Justice has settled all of the United States Mint's copyright, trademark and false advertising claims against the Washington Mint, LLC. The settlement, in which the Washington Mint must pay the U.S. Government \$2.1 million, marks the end of three years of litigation.

"This historic settlement affirms the United States Mint's commitment to protect and inform its customers, to educate consumers across the nation, and to safeguard the United States Mint's reputation for producing the highest quality coins and products," said United States Mint Director Henrietta Holsman Fore.

The United States Mint commenced its lawsuit against the Washington Mint in 1999, when the private Minnesota firm refused to cease and desist its false and deceptive advertising, as well as its sales, of unauthorized medallions bearing the protected image of Sacagawea that appears on the United States \$1 coin. The U.S. District Court for the District of Minnesota did indeed find the Washington Mint liable for violating the United States Mint's copyright in the Golden Dollar obverse design. The Court also ruled that Washington Mint was liable for infringing the United States Mint's famous incontestable trademark and engaging in false and deceptive advertising. Because of these violations, the Court issued a permanent injunction against the Washington Mint.

Under the settlement, the United States Government has agreed to resolve all pending claims against the Washington Mint. The consent decree, approved by the Court, also requires the Washington Mint to serve a consumer awareness notice to its customers of U.S. coins or U.S. coin replicas since January 1, 2000, in an effort to eliminate existing confusion over the Washington Mint's status as a private business and to educate consumers on replica coin products in general.

The Washington Mint remains subject to the permanent injunction, which prohibits it from producing and marketing replicas of the Golden Dollar coin. The injunction also requires the Washington Mint to use a court — ordered disclaimer in all advertisements and marketing materials featuring United States Mint-related products. To assist the Government in its monitoring of the permanent injunction, the settlement requires the Washington Mint to furnish the Justice Department copies of all marketing materials involving U.S. coins or replicas of U.S. coins for three years.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

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Contact

Press Inquiries: Office of Corporate Communications (202) 354-7222

Customer Service Information: (800) USA MINT (872-6468)

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